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March 24, 2009

Commissioner Kathleen Driscoll
Ravalli County Administration Building
215 South 4th Street, Suite A
Hamilton, MT 59840

Dear Commissioner Driscoll:

I attended the meeting concerning the Ravalli County Airport held on March 16, 2009, and realized that there is some information I can provide to help you in the decision-making process.

One of the Congressional mandates for the FAA is that the agency should encourage all airports in the national system to become self-sustaining in operations. Alternative #4 would allow the best opportunity for the Ravalli County Airport to pay for all operating costs with revenue generated on the airport. At least a dozen more building sites would be available for hangars located between the existing taxiway and existing runway if the new runway is built 400 feet to the east. This alternative would also make room for the historical hangars to be moved due west from their present location, without encroaching on the clear airspace required south of the runway or on the wetland area on the southwest corner of airport property, north of Tammany Lane. The 240-foot move might not allow this location to be used.

A 400-foot move east would also allow for safer construction while operations continue during the summer construction season. I landed at Deer Lodge while the runway there was being lengthened, and it was rather unnerving to have huge earthmoving equipment lumbering along the ground adjacent to the landing surface. The runway there is now 5,800 feet long, and there has been no appreciable increase in jet traffic.

I did some research on light, medium, and large business jets, and found that the light jets that frequent our airport are typically 4-6 passengers, and require 3,500 to 4,000 feet of runway for takeoff at sea level, with a full load. Medium jets, carrying 6-8 passengers, require 5,100 to 5,800 feet of runway for takeoff at sea level with a full load, and the large jets, carrying 9-14 passengers, need nearly 6,000 feet of runway for takeoff at sea level. As you have probably heard, we do have a few medium jets that land at Hamilton now, but only when weather conditions and their weights allow it. If you are interested, you can check out this information for yourself at the website address: http://www.jets.com/Jets_Research/JetsListing. Just for fun, I found a Boeing Business Jet that is a modified 737, configured with queen size bed, exercise room, two offices, two lavatories with showers, and noted that it weighs 171,000 pounds (ten times the weight-bearing capacity of our current and the proposed new runway), and requires 6,000 feet of ground roll to take off at sea level.

Thank you for your support of the proposed safety improvements. I look forward to a resolution of this issue in my lifetime.

Sincerely,

Wendy J. Beye

Cc: Commissioners Grandstaff, Rokosch, Iman, and Chilcott

PROFILE, RAVALLI COUNTY AIRPORT PART 77 SURFACE

